

accounting in the use of these funds. We had one of the most startling reports that I think that I have ever read as a Member of Congress. What we have discovered is that at the very top of this administration, there has been a looting of hunters' and fishermen's funds. People who hunt and fish in the United States pay an excise tax into a fund, the Pittman Robertson fund, and a fisheries fund to provide for habitat to help sustain hunting and provide habitat for hunting.

What we have discovered is that the Fish and Wildlife Service has been looting this account.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION WAIVING POINTS OF ORDER AGAINST CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2465, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. DIAZ-BALART, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-268) on the resolution (H. Res. 262) waiving points of order against the conference report to accompany the bill (H.R. 2465) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2606, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

Mr. DIAZ-BALART, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-269) on the resolution (H. Res. 263) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2606) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

ADJOURNMENT TO THURSDAY,
JULY 29, 1999

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 10 a.m. on Thursday, July 29, 1999.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

□ 2300

They set up special secret accounts. Out of these accounts, they paid for expenses that are inappropriate, illegal. There is not adequate accounting for these funds. If I can make this last point, they even pressured one of their

employees to approve a funding request by an anti-hunting group, using funds paid in by hunting and fishing men and women, to use those funds to fund an organization fund for the animals in an anti-hunting campaign.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman from Montana (Mr. HILL) repeat his assertions, because I think, given the culture of the present day, given the media proclivities here on Capitol Hill and beyond, sometimes, quite often, these stories are missed for whatever reason. Could the gentleman repeat what he has found in the Committee on Resources.

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, what this general accounting report, and this is a preliminary report, we have asked them to do a more thorough examination, but they have created several administrative accounts, one that the chairman has even labeled a mystery administration account, and used the funds in those accounts to fund projects that would not normally meet the criteria.

They have looted those funds, tried to direct those funds into anti-hunting efforts. In some instances, there is evidence that they used those funds to pay for expenses that are not authorized by Congress. In other instances, they have failed to account for those funds. They have failed to establish any criteria for the approval or the granting of those funds. This is at the very highest levels of the administration.

Now, the person that revealed this information to our committee was fired for failing to go along and has recently entered into a settlement with the Fish and Wildlife Service. But, interestingly, that settlement has a confidential clause, a gag order attached to it. So at our hearing, that employee was unable to give us all the details that he wanted to give us.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, if I could ask the gentleman from Montana, is it his impression that this administration was using those different entities, those different people to campaign for a certain point of view, using these people in a way in a campaign that would be unlawful?

Mr. HILL of Montana. Mr. Speaker, this is certainly consistent with the agenda of this administration, which is to restrict the public use of lands. I long suspected that part of that effort is to reduce access by hunters and people who fish and use the public lands for that purpose. This is consistent with that pattern of activity and that agenda.

But in this instance, this is not a small sum of money. This is \$550 million a year that goes into this trust fund, and they were peeling off between 6 and 8 percent of this fund, which is \$40 million a year for this purpose. What we also discovered is they took money. Understand, this is a trust fund for habitat, and they were taking this money to backfill the other parts of their budget because they were running short of money in different areas. So

they took money from this account for that purpose.

So there are extremely serious allegations here. We are going to continue to have more hearings on it. I am advocating for the committee and the Fish and Wildlife Service to find a way to lift the gag order on this former employee so this person can tell us the whole truth. There were questions that I asked at the hearing that this person was unable to answer because of the confidentiality agreement that had been entered into. But these are very serious matters.

But I know it is troubling to the sportsmen and women in Montana who, through the purchase of guns and ammunition and sporting goods and fishing gear, are paying an excise tax into this fund for habitat purpose, to have this administration using that money or trying to use that money, meeting with, conspiring with anti-hunting groups to try to undermine the very people who are paying the tax.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing is we probably would not have discovered this scandal were it not for a handful of conscientious employees and others who work with the Interior Department on management of this fund who found the courage to stand up and represent and think about the taxpayers and what is morally proper and risk their jobs and perhaps their future careers as well. They came forward to Congress and explained what was going on, which it allowed us to have the hearing and move forward. This is a scandal of major proportions.

The gentleman touched on a point that I want to move into next, and that is he said that there is a pattern in the administration when it comes to public use of public lands. That is also true of private lands. There is a deeply held belief in this administration that human beings are a problem, that human beings should not be enjoying our national parks, our national wilderness areas, our National Forests, and so on; that these should be off limits for human activity, whether it is hunting or recreation or even when it comes to private property when it comes to responsible land use.

We talked earlier about the Endangered Species Act and the impact that that has on the ability of an individual private property owner to use his or her land as they see fit.

I want to use an example for my colleagues briefly, and that is one of this apple, just to dramatize the importance of these public lands-private lands use issues when it comes to agriculture.

If this apple represents the surface area of the globe, we have to keep in mind that approximately three-fourths of the Earth is covered with water. So if I cut this apple into quarters, we have represented here the available use of land mass that exists on the earth.

Now, keeping in mind that also of this land mass, approximately half is